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291559Z Sep 00

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ACTION AF-00

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	SRPP-00	DS-00	EB-00	EUR-00	VC-00	H-01	TEDE-00
	INR-00	IO-00	L-00	VCE-00	AC-01	DCP-01	NSAE-00
	OIC-02	OMB-01	OPIC-01	PA-00	PM-00	PRS-00	ACE-00
	P-00	SP-00	IRM-00	SSO-00	STR-00	TRSE-00	USIE-00
	PMB-00	DSCC-00	PRM-01	DRL-02	G-00	NFAT-00	SAS-00

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FM AMEMBASSY HARARE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7240
INFO NSC WASHDC IMMEDIATE
SOUTHERN AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 HARARE 005581

SIPDIS

NSC FOR SENIOR AFRICA DIRECTOR GAYLE SMITH
LONDON FOR CHARLES GURNEY
PARIS FOR BISA WILLIAMS
PASS USTR FOR ROSA WHITAKER

E.O. 12958: DECL: 09/15/10

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SUBJECT: MDC PRESIDENT TSVANGIRAI CALLS ON AMBASSADOR

CLASSIFIED BY AMBASSADOR MCDONALD. REASONS: 1.5 (B) AND
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(D).

SUMMARY

11. (C) IN A SEPTEMBER 29 MEETING WITH THE AMBASSADOR, MDC PRESIDENT MORGAN TSVANGIRAI CALLED THE BOMBING OF MDC HEADQUARTERS AND SUBSEQUENT RAIDS ON ITS OFFICES "AMATEURISH." THE GOZ HAS NO EVIDENCE AGAINST THE MDC LEADERSHIP BUT WOULD CONTINUE TO TRY TO PAINT THE PARTY AS A SUBVERSIVE ORGANIZATION. TSVANGIRAI AGREED THAT THE GOZ WAS TRYING TO USE THE ZIMBABWE DEMOCRACY ACT AS A SCAPEGOAT, BUT THE MDC WOULD TRY TO KEEP THE FOCUS ON THE GOVERNMENT'S POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC MISMANAGEMENT. HE LAMENTED THAT ZANU-PF MPS HAVE BEEN UNWILLING TO COOPERATE WITH THE MDC ON ISSUES OF CRITICAL NATIONAL IMPORTANCE. TSVANGIRAI EXPRESSED CONCERN THAT THE GOZ IS USING WAR VETERANS AS A RESERVE ARMY, INDICATED BY THEIR RECENT PLACEMENT UNDER THE AUTHORITY OF THE MINISTRY OF DEFENSE. THE MDC PRESIDENT REPORTED THAT THE MDC IS PLANNING A RALLY IN HARARE ON SEPTEMBER 30 TO CELEBRATE THE PARTY'S ONE-YEAR ANNIVERSARY. THE PARTY'S EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE WOULD MEET SUBSEQUENTLY TO DISCUSS ORGANIZING MASS ACTION. THE AMBASSADOR URGED TSVANGIRAI TO EXERCISE RESTRAINT AND CAUTION WHEN ORGANIZING SUCH ACTIVITIES. END SUMMARY.

12. (C) MDC PRESIDENT MORGAN TSVANGIRAI CALLED ON AMBASSADOR MCDONALD ON SEPTEMBER 29. HE WAS ACCOMPANIED BY MDC CHAIRMAN ISAAC MATONGO AND SENIOR ADVISOR GANDI MUDZINGWA. THE AMBASSADOR WAS JOINED BY THE DCM AND
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BOMBING AND RAIDS OF MDC OFFICES

13. (C) TSVANGIRAI SAID HE HAD REQUESTED THE MEETING BECAUSE HE WANTED TO TOUCH BASE AND TO RAISE SEVERAL SPECIFIC POINTS. FIRST, HE SAID, THE RECENT BOMBING OF MDC HEADQUARTERS AND THE SUBSEQUENT SEARCH OF THE PARTY'S OFFICES HAD SIMPLY BEEN A PRETEXT TO GAIN ACCESS TO THE MDC'S RECORDS AND STRATEGIES. TSVANGIRAI REPORTED THAT TWO PEOPLE HAD BEEN CHARGED IN THE CASE (NOTE: ON TWO COUNTS OF TERRORISM AND SABOTAGE UNDER THE LAW AND ORDER MAINTENANCE ACT. END NOTE) -- A SERVING POLICE OFFICER (ZACHARIA NKOMO) AND AN MDC SECURITY OFFICIAL (SOLOMON CHIKOWERO). NKOMO, WHO ALLEGEDLY THREW THE GRENADE, HAD PARTICIPATED IN THE MDC'S YOUTH MOVEMENT BUT HAD NEVER DONE SECURITY WORK FOR THE PARTY, AS ALLEGED BY THE GOZ. THE GOZ, TSVANGIRAI INSISTED, WAS TRYING TO FABRICATE A LINKAGE BETWEEN NKOMO AND CHIKOWERO, WHOM IT HAS ACCUSED OF GIVING THE GRENADE TO NKOMO. TSVANGIRAI SCOFFED AT

THE CHARGES AGAINST CHIKOWERO, WHO HAS BEEN RELEASED ON BAIL, SAYING THE GOZ HAD NO EVIDENCE AGAINST HIM AND WAS TRUMPING UP CHARGES AGAINST HIM TO JUSTIFY FURTHER ACTION AGAINST THE OPPOSITION PARTY.

14. (C) WHAT STEPS WAS THE GOZ PLANNING TO TAKE NEXT AGAINST THE MDC, THE AMBASSADOR ASKED? TSVANGIRAI DESCRIBED THE WHOLE BOMBING INCIDENT AND SUBSEQUENT RAID AS "AMATEURISH." THE GOZ IS TRYING TO PAINT THE MDC AS A SUBVERSIVE ORGANIZATION SO THAT IT CAN ARREST THE PARTY
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LEADERSHIP. THEIR ATTEMPT HAS FAILED, AS THEY HAVE NO EVIDENCE, BUT THEY WILL TRY AGAIN. ASKED BY THE AMBASSADOR WHETHER HE FEELS INCREASINGLY THREATENED, TSVANGIRAI REPLIED THAT SOME IN THE GOZ WOULD LOVE TO SEE

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HIM "DISAPPEAR FROM THE EARTH." BRINGING THAT ABOUT, HOWEVER, WOULD BE VERY RISKY FOR THE GOZ. THE MDC WANTS TO IMPROVE THE PROTECTION OF ITS LEADERSHIP, TSVANGIRAI NOTED, AND HE HOPED HIS SECURITY DIRECTOR COULD CONTINUE TO SEEK ADVICE FROM THE EMBASSY'S NEW REGIONAL SECURITY OFFICER, AS WAS DONE WITH HIS PREDECESSOR. THE AMBASSADOR STATED THAT, WITHIN OUR LIMITATIONS, WE WOULD BE PLEASED TO CONTINUE TO ASSIST.

ECONOMY

15. (C) TSVANGIRAI SAID ZIMBABWEANS ARE GETTING INCREASINGLY ANGRY ABOUT THE CONTINUED DETERIORATION OF THE ECONOMY. THERE HAD BEEN SOME HOPE, HE NOTED, WHEN THE NEW CABINET WAS APPOINTED, BUT THE ECONOMY HAS ONLY WORSENEDED. ALTHOUGH HE ACKNOWLEDGED THAT FINANCE MINISTER SIMBA MAKONI AND INTERNATIONAL TRADE AND INDUSTRY MINISTER NKOSANA MOYO WERE CAPABLE, THEY ARE PART OF A CORRUPT SYSTEM AND WILL NOT BE GIVEN THE NECESSARY AUTHORITY TO MAKE DECISIONS. THE MDC HAD PROVIDED THAT

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O 291559Z SEP 00
FM AMEMBASSY HARARE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7241
INFO NSC WASHDC IMMEDIATE
SOUTHERN AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 03 HARARE 005581

SIPDIS

NSC FOR SENIOR AFRICA DIRECTOR GAYLE SMITH
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SUBJECT: MDC PRESIDENT TSVANGIRAI CALLS ON AMBASSADOR

ASSESSMENT TO THE IMF TEAM DURING ITS RECENT VISIT.
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ZIMBABWE DEMOCRACY ACT

16. (C) TSVANGIRAI RAISED THE ZIMBABWE DEMOCRACY ACT (ZDA), NOTING THE GOZ'S ATTEMPTS TO PORTRAY IT AS A SANCTIONS BILL WHICH UNDERMINES THE COUNTRY'S SOVEREIGNTY. THE AMBASSADOR AGREED THAT GOZ OFFICIALS HAVE TRIED TO USE THE ZDA AS A SCAPEGOAT FOR PROBLEMS OF THEIR OWN MAKING. HE POINTED OUT THAT THE ZDA CONVEYS A VERY IMPORTANT MESSAGE WHICH THE GOZ SHOULD TAKE TO HEART. ACCORDING TO TSVANGIRAI, THE MDC POSITION IS THAT THE BILL LAYS OUT, ACCURATELY, THE UNFORTUNATE CURRENT FACTS OF LIFE IN ZIMBABWE. THE OPPOSITION PARTY, HE SAID, WOULD CONTINUE TO TRY TO KEEP THE FOCUS ON THE VIOLENCE IN THE COUNTRY AND THE GOVERNMENT'S REFUSAL TO RESTORE AND ENSURE THE RULE OF LAW.

PARLIAMENT

17. (C) TSVANGIRAI NOTED THAT THE MDC MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT HAD BEEN "RAISING LOTS OF VOICES," AND HE APPEALED FOR ASSISTANCE AIMED AT STRENGTHENING PARLIAMENT AS AN INSTITUTION. THE AMBASSADOR DESCRIBED THE MDC'S WINNING OF 57 SEATS IN JUNE AS A VERY POSITIVE DEVELOPMENT BUT EXPRESSED CONCERN THAT IT MAY BE DIFFICULT FOR DEMOCRACY TO TAKE HOLD UNDER THE CURRENT SERIOUS POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC PROBLEMS. ZANU-PF, TSVANGIRAI REPLIED, HAS NOT ACCEPTED THE ELECTION RESULTS

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AND THAT IS WHY THE RULING PARTY CONTINUES TO BE SO
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CONFRONTATIONAL. HE LAMENTED THAT ZANU-PF MPS HAVE EVINCED NO WILLINGNESS TO ENGAGE IN BIPARTISAN COOPERATION, EVEN ON ISSUES OF CRITICAL NATIONAL IMPORTANCE, SUCH AS LAND, ECONOMY, AND RESTORATION OF THE RULE OF LAW.

WAR VETERANS

18. (C) TSVANGIRAI CLAIMED THAT THE GOZ IS USING WAR VETERANS AS A RESERVE ARMY BECAUSE PRESIDENT MUGABE DOES NOT TRUST THE REGULAR ARMY TO DO HIS DIRTY WORK. THE RECENT PLACEMENT OF THE WAR VETERANS ASSOCIATION UNDER THE MINISTRY OF DEFENSE, HE SAID, FORMALIZES THEIR MILITARY ROLE, WHICH WORRIES THE MDC A GREAT DEAL. IN THE MEANTIME, THE LAWLESSNESS CONTINUES THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY AND THE GOZ IS MAKING NO ATTEMPT TO CONTROL IT.

MASS ACTION

19. (C) THE AMBASSADOR ASKED TSVANGIRAI TO COMMENT ON REPORTS OF THE MDC'S INTENTION TO ORGANIZE SOME SORT OF MASS ACTION. THE PARTY, TSVANGIRAI REPLIED, IS PLANNING TO HOLD A MID-DAY RALLY IN HARARE'S RUFARO STADIUM ON SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 30 (NOTE: MDC CHAIRMAN ISAAC MATONGO LATER TOLD DCM AND POLOFF THAT THE PARTY EXPECTS 50-60,000 PEOPLE FROM AROUND THE COUNTRY TO ATTEND. END NOTE.) THE PURPOSE OF THE RALLY IS TO CELEBRATE THE ONE-YEAR ANNIVERSARY OF THE PARTY'S FOUNDING, TO THANK MDC SUPPORTERS FOR THEIR COURAGE DURING THE PAST YEAR, AND TO
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DISCUSS THE PARTY'S NEXT STEPS.

110. (C) ASKED WHETHER STAYAWAYS WOULD BE ORGANIZED AFTER THE RALLY, TSVANGIRAI SAID THEY WERE UNAVOIDABLE BUT THAT NOTHING HAD BEEN PLANNED. THE AMBASSADOR URGED THE MDC TO EXERCISE RESTRAINT AND CAUTION IN PLANNING THE NEXT STEPS. THE OPPOSITION PARTY, HE POINTED OUT, HAS BEEN SUCCESSFUL BECAUSE IT HAS MAINTAINED PUBLIC FOCUS ON ISSUES WHICH MATTER TO MOST ZIMBABWEANS, WITHOUT TRYING TO INFLAME AN ALREADY EXPLOSIVE SITUATION. HE EXPRESSED HOPE THAT THE PARTY WOULD CONTINUE TO TAKE THIS APPROACH AND WOULD NOT GIVE THE GOVERNMENT AN EXCUSE TO CRACK DOWN. TSVANGIRAI ACCEPTED THE POINT, BUT SAID HE WAS IN A DELICATE POSITION -- PEOPLE ACROSS THE COUNTRY ARE ANGRY AND ARE DEMANDING ACTION, AS THE CURRENT COURSE OF EVENTS IN ZIMBABWE IS UNSUSTAINABLE. THE SEPTEMBER 30 RALLY, HE SAID, WOULD SET THE TONE FOR A SUBSEQUENT EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING, WHICH WOULD DECIDE ON THE PARTY'S FUTURE ACTIONS.

111. (C) THE DCM ASKED FOR TSVANGIRAI'S ASSESSMENT OF PRESIDENT MUGABE'S CURRENT THINKING ON THE 2002 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION -- IS HE CONSIDERING STEPPING DOWN OR WOULD HE SERVE OUT HIS TERM. HE HAS SEEN NO INDICATION, TSVANGIRAI RESPONDED, THAT MUGABE WILL STEP

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O 291559Z SEP 00
FM AMEMBASSY HARARE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7242
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 03 OF 03 HARARE 005581

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SUBJECT: MDC PRESIDENT TSVANGIRAI CALLS ON AMBASSADOR

DOWN. THE ZANU-PF EXTRAORDINARY CONGRESS LATER THIS YEAR
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WOULD FOCUS PRIMARILY ON THE SUCCESSION ISSUE, AND WAS
POTENTIALLY A WATERSHED EVENT. HE THOUGHT MUGABE WOULD
SERVE OUT HIS TERM BUT WOULD AGREE THAT SOMEONE ELSE --
UNDER HIS CONTROL OR INFLUENCE -- SHOULD CONTEST THE
PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION. THE DCM EXPRESSED SOME SKEPTICISM
ABOUT THAT SCENARIO, EMPHASIZING THAT A DECISION TO SERVE
OUT HIS TERM BUT NOT TO STAND FOR REELECTION COULD MAKE
MUGABE A LAME DUCK DURING HIS FINAL TWO YEARS IN OFFICE.
ASKED WHETHER MUGABE IS GROOMING FINANCE MINISTER MAKONI
AS HIS SUCCESSOR, TSVANGIRAI WAS DOUBTFUL, SAYING THAT
MAKONI DOES NOT HAVE A STRONG POLITICAL BASE. TSVANGIRAI
AFFIRMED THAT MUGABE'S DEPARTURE IS INEVITABLE AND THAT
HE MUST BE PERSUADED TO RETIRE. THE PROBLEM IS THAT HE
HAS NOTHING TO LOSE BY EMPLOYING CONFRONTATION AND WILL
ONLY RESPOND TO PRESSURE. THAT, TSVANGIRAI STRESSED, IS
WHY MASS ACTION IS NECESSARY.

COMMENT

[12](#). (C) TSVANGIRAI WAS SOMEWHAT CALMER THAN THE LAST
TIME WE MET WITH HIM, BUT CLEARLY VERY WORRIED ABOUT
RECENT POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENTS. IT WAS
OBVIOUS FROM HIS COMMENTS THAT THE MDC IS FEELING INTENSE
PRESSURE FROM ITS SUPPORTERS NATIONWIDE TO TAKE A FIRM
STAND AGAINST THE GOVERNMENT'S FAILURE TO TURN THE
ECONOMY AROUND AND TO RESTORE THE RULE OF LAW. HE IS
UNDERSTANDABLY RELUCTANT, HOWEVER, TO ENCOURAGE LARGE-
SCALE PROTESTS FOR FEAR OF UNLEASHING A GOVERNMENT
CRACKDOWN THAT COULD TURN BLOODY. AT THE SAME TIME, THE
MDC RISKS LOSING LEGITIMACY IF IT DOES NOT RESPOND TO THE
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ANGER AND FRUSTRATION OF ITS CONSTITUENTS. TSVANGIRAI
AND THE REST OF THE MDC ARE CLEARLY BETWEEN A ROCK AND A
HARD PLACE. THE SEPTEMBER 30 RALLY, AND THE LIKELY
DEMANDS FOR ACTION BY THOSE IN ATTENDANCE, WILL BE A
SIGNIFICANT TEST OF THE MDC LEADERSHIP'S METTLE.
MEANWHILE, WE HAVE ADVISED EMBASSY STAFF AND THE AMERICAN
COMMUNITY TO AVOID THE AREA NEAR THE STADIUM ON SEPTEMBER
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